

ROUTING

217

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Wednesday March 16, 1977 CG NIDC 77-061C

State Dept. review completed

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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION
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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Wednesday, March 16, 1977

[The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.]

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ZAIRE: Military Situation

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[redacted] //The Katangan force that invaded Zaire a week ago appears to have consolidated its position in Shaba Province and has begun to expand to the east and north.//

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[redacted]

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[redacted] The US consul in Lubumbashi emphasizes the Zairian army's unpreparedness and its dismal performance in the few encounters thus far. The army apparently has deliberately avoided battle.

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[redacted] The consul also reports that Lubumbashi is calm but that this situation could change as reports spread of casualties and Katangan successes. The consul says that latent sentiment for Katangan independence persists among those native to Shaba, while those from outside the region will feel increasingly threatened the longer the Katangan invaders remain unopposed.

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[redacted]
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[redacted] Belgian military aid--two C-130s loaded with arms and ammunition--is due in Kinshasa today. The Belgian government, however, does not seem to view the situation as particularly serious, and may believe that President Mobutu is exaggerating the threat to obtain long-sought military assistance.

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[redacted] //We believe the threat to Mobutu's regime is already taking on serious proportions. The situation will become more severe if the Zairian military does not undertake effective countermeasures to halt what now appears to be a major effort to achieve at least the secession of Katanga, if not the overthrow of the Mobutu regime.//

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USSR-SYRIA: Official Visit

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[redacted] Syrian President Asad has accepted a Soviet invitation to meet with General Secretary Brezhnev in Moscow in early April, before Asad's meeting with President Carter in Europe. Foreign Minister Khaddam has confirmed to the US embassy in Damascus that the two leaders are planning to meet, but he did not give dates or a location.

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[redacted] The USSR is unhappy over Syrian support for Egypt's efforts to encourage the US to resume its central role in promoting a Middle East peace settlement. The Soviets are probably also discouraged by the decline in the number of their personnel in Syria during the past several months; Asad has been reducing the Soviet military mission.

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[redacted] Both sides probably hope the Asad-Brezhnev meeting will prevent more slippage in relations; they may sign a new arms agreement to demonstrate continued friendship. The USSR is anxious to prevent a further loss of its presence and face; Syria wants to retain its arms supply relationship with the USSR and to underscore for the US the independent role of Syria in the negotiating process.

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[redacted]
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